

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society

April 1991 Newsletter

Next Meeting

• Monday, April 1st: at Pearl Amster's, 2304 Hartford Road, 472-7028, at 7:30 pm. Just east of Mopac, drive south on Hartford. Please bring munchies!

Agenda: After a short business meeting Michael Drousche will have a musical surprise for us. He hints that Celeste Booker will play the piano and a good time will be had by all. (Celeste was Music Director for our production of *Patience*.)

Last Meeting

• Our last meeting was held on Monday, March 4th, at Pearl's. Eighteen members were present: Pearl Amster, Jacki Chapman, Karen Collier, Michael Drousche, Norma Garza, Reba Gillman, Loel Graber, Bob Greenwood, Enid Hallock, Carla Hammock, Telisa Harwell, Bill Hatcher, Kate Hendricks, Allen Lawshae, Robert Mellin, Anne Smith, Dale Reynolds attending his first meeting, and new member Deborah Zallen.

President Karen announced that Bob Kusnetz was at home with acute Hepatitis, and could not present his program on Parodies of Gilbert and Sullivan. Jacki had brought a tape of the PBS production of *Gondoliers* to show us instead, but technical difficulties intervened. Jacki expressed thanks to Leonard Johnson, who had arranged for her to borrow the tape from the UT Music Library.

Karen reported that she had submitted the grant application to the Austin Arts Commission on time, with many thanks to Carla, Jacki, Michael, and Norma for their help. Karen plans to send letters to local foundations next month.

New: Mail to the Society may now be addressed to:
P.O. Box 684254
Austin, TX 78768

However, please continue to send address changes, dues payments, and news for the Newsletter to Reba at 327-2277,
1606 The High Road
Austin, TX 78746

G&S Quiz: Michael passed out slips of paper and collected replies to the question: What is the musical number in *Pirates* that was written for and performed in another G&S opera? Find out at the April 1st meeting!
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The Pirates of Penzance (A Progress Report)

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR Bil Pfuderer Director and Designer

After having acted for several years in a G&S company under the firm hand of a D'Oyly Carte director it was with apprehension that I approached this production of *Pirates*.

The apprehension proved to be appropriate. Although I have directed over 60 musical productions, some with amateur casts and others with professionals, nothing has been as tricky or as difficult as this seemingly simple piece. ... The learning is awesome and the respect for the lasting and universal quality of the comedy grows with each rehearsal.

Perhaps my greatest challenge is to make this production accessible to a mass audience in Austin, Texas in 1991. ... [I have] a fine support staff and one of the most multi-talented and sparkling casts it's ever been my pleasure to work with. ... Each rehearsal reveals some new facet of the piece or presents a new performance challenge.

Simply co-ordinating the physical demands of the work with vocal rehearsal and balance, complex dance and movement patterns, and daily diction drills is exciting and exhilarating. ... I feel a little like a gourmet cook adding some spice here, deleting an ingredient there, adjusting and preparing an old family recipe for an eagerly awaited dinner party. I'll have my fingers crossed until that moment when the ingredients come out of the oven, hopefully for the pleasure, enjoyment, and enrichment of all.

Editor's Note: Bil is well known in Austin as director, actor, and designer of both sets and costumes. He has directed the Zilker Park summer musicals for years.

He worked in the 1960's with the *Skylight Comic Opera* in Milwaukee, under the direction of John Denison, a former member of the D'Oyly Carte company. Denison used the D'Oyly Carte prompt books and held the cast strictly to the traditional interpretations, down to the last lift of a finger. Among other roles, Bil played the part of Dick Deadeye in *Pinafore*, and Jack Point, the Jester, in *Yeomen of the Guard*. Bil reports that it was a wonderful and rigorous experience; but the pay was low and he had to drive a cab to make ends meet.

Membership Dues

Collecting dues has become a year-long process, and very time consuming. The red "DUES" on your label means it's time to renew. Please pay promptly, or let me know if you want to drop your membership.

Last Meeting cont.

Reports from the Production Committee: I. Carla read a list of goals for the Society articulated by the committee. (They appear in the yellow flyer cover sheet. Note misprint: more information will appear in the MAY Newsletter.)

There followed some discussion of 1) the proposed garage and bake sale; 2) a proposal to hold High Tea at the Caswell House, or a similar location, on a Sunday afternoon ~~later in the summer~~. The committee suggested a large mailing to announce the next Season and the Fund Raiser (High Tea) to generate money and memberships.

II. Michael reported on all the theater spaces in Austin, including several new, small places. The Zachary Scott Theatre Center Arena Theatre is a very nice new space, with about 120 seats.

III. Norma Garza reported on the research into possible shows. Committee members had worked hard to study the less well-known operas. They all require a major investment for production. Jacki discussed the idea of doing an imaginative novelty that would cost less, and still attract the basic G&S audience. She had in mind works by either Gilbert or Sullivan, rather than the famous team. She proposed that we plan to do a small production of this kind in Fall '91, and a large, well-known work in Spring '92. This was accepted by a vote of 16 For; 1 Against; 1 Abstaining.

Jacki said she wanted us to know that President Karen had written thank-you notes to every participant in the Amster Soirée. The meeting then adjourned for delicious goodies. Thank you, Pearl, for your hospitality!

Reba

• **Bob Kusnetz** thanks everyone for the get-well card signed at the last meeting, and for all the good wishes. He is taking it easy and gradually improving but it's a slow process. He hopes to see everyone at the next meeting.

• **Reba Gillman** is leaving for Czechoslovakia on March 25th, and will return on April 4th.

• **The Pirates of Penzance:** Volunteers who want to usher or to work on the technical crew should call Karen at 288-5329 (h), or 338-3551 (w). Because of Bob K's illness Karen is now our official representative to Live Oak Theatre.

In a few days we will mail out Flyers with information about tickets and the opening night Gala. Call Live Oak soon for reservations and use your flyer to get a discount. Many thanks to Susie Jacobson for her hard work on the mailing labels.

• **Other Useful Numbers:** Michael wants ideas for programs at meetings. Call him at 459-9298.

Jacki welcomes ideas about production; call her at 323-0562, and leave a message.

• **The Gilbert and Sullivan Lexicon** by Harry Benford, revised and enlarged edition, has arrived and will be available at the April meeting for those who ordered it. Cost will be \$12.50, including shipping. Thanks to those who have already paid the \$12.

4/91
The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Reba Gillman, Secretary
1606 The High Road
Austin, Texas 78746

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The
Gilbert
SULLIVAN *Society*
O F A U S T I N
is having a

Garage Sale and Bake Sale

Why?

To support the goals of this year's production committee, which include:

- Continue to build the Society's reputation for highly professional productions.
- Work toward consistency in production so that audience members will know what to expect from our productions.
- Develop a more consistent process of record keeping.
- Create a well organized process of production and an atmosphere for creative artistic endeavors that will encourage music and theatre people to work with the Society.
- Begin fund-raising endeavors so that we may grow as a performing organization.

The Society cannot improve the quality of its productions using only the money made through ticket sales. Therefore, we are expanding our fund raising efforts to include increased grass roots support, as well as government and corporate funding.

How you can help...

This garage sale and bake sale, which will be held in June, is our first attempt to increase grass roots support, and we need all of our members to participate. So, as you are doing your spring cleaning, please keep all the stuff you were going to throw or give away for our garage sale. Also, be thinking of something you can make for the bake sale. Then get ready to come out on the day of the sale and shop, eat, and enjoy the entertainment that will be provided by some of our performers!

In the April newsletter, we will have the specific information on the date of the sale, drop-off locations, and people to contact for more information.